

THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP (COPIE 2)

“A network of people actively involved in opening up entrepreneurship to all parts of society”

As recession bites all of the Member States of the European Union are looking for new solutions to create jobs that are being lost across the economy. Stimulating entrepreneurship is one part of a coordinated response.

Micro enterprises employing less than ten people already make up 90% of all enterprises in the EU employ 30% of employees and produce 20% of output. Previous recessions have shown that as larger firms shed labour new growth and jobs come from the smaller businesses.



Bruno Texeira, 29,
set up a trade consultancy in Porto, Portugal.*



Khadija Majdoubi, 38, realised her dream
of opening a beauty salon in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Many more people have the drive and passion to become entrepreneurs but for various reasons they do not seize the opportunity. Sometimes it is about enterprise culture, sometimes lack of support or finance and sometimes they start but fail too early because they lack skills in running an aspect of the business or become trapped in the wrong market. It is people not policy that create businesses but good policy can make more people try the enterprise option and more of those that try can succeed.

The ESF (and ERDF) can play a much stronger and more coherent role in supporting and widening entrepreneurship across the European Union.

COPIE 2 is focused on making this happen.

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* All pictures in this document by courtesy of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion – European Social Fund. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/videos_photos/videos_photos_en.htm

1. WHAT IS COPIE 2?

The Community of Practice on Inclusive Entrepreneurship (COPIE) is a learning network of ESF Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies at national and regional level in Europe.

The COPIE partners share a common concern to widen entrepreneurship and make support systems work better across diverse populations. These organisations have demonstrated that it is possible to make it easier for people from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds or places to engage in setting up businesses.

Women illustrate the point, only half as many women as men in Europe set up in business but EQUAL projects demonstrated that there is potential for many more to do so. This could transform their lives while adding to Europe's competitiveness and economic resilience.

Entrepreneurship is already a development strategy for nearly 30 million Europeans. With the right conditions and policies, the members of COPIE 2 believe entrepreneurship has the potential to unleash the creativity and energy of millions more.



Radmila Petroušková, 26,
opened a health-food café
in České Budějovice in the Czech Republic.

2. WHO ARE THE PARTNERS OF COPIE 2?

COPIE 2 is led by the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs in Germany through the ESF unit.

There are three types of COPIE partner available to Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies:

1. Lead partners
2. Partners
3. Dissemination partners

Lead partners organise the COPIE communities of practice in thematic areas. They are responsible for employing experts, convening meetings and ensuring that the work programme is developed in a timely way. The lead partners are:

- **ASTURIAS (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Industry and Employment - Department of Trade, Self-Employment and Social Economy
(Lead partner: *Integrated Start-Up Support*)
- **CZECH REPUBLIC:** The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Department for ESF Management,
(Co-lead partner: *Access to Finance*)
- **FLANDERS (BELGIUM):** ESF Agency Flanders
(Lead partner: *Access to Finance*);
- **GERMANY:** The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
(Lead partner: *Quality management / Action Planning / European Tool*)
- **SPAIN:** The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs — European Social Fund Unit
(Lead partner: *Enterprise Education*)

Partners participate in COPIE activities as full members of the community, they make in-kind financial contributions by hosting meetings, sending their representatives to COP meetings, and they pay for a regional COP facilitator.

Partners are responsible for ensuring that contributions to the baseline study are completed on time (partner profiles etc) and they convene the regional stakeholder group(s) for thematic activity. The group of partners include:

- **ANDALUCIA (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Employment - Regional Employment Service
- **EXTREMADURA (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Equality and Employment
- **GALICIA (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Economy and industry - Enterprise and and Innovation Center
- **LITHUANIA:** The Ministry of Finance
- **WALLONIA (BELGIUM):** ESF Agency Wallonia

Dissemination partners participate in COPIE activities in a limited way. They attend meetings of COPs in which they are active but with the intention of disseminating results in their Member States. They pay for their own costs for transport. Dissemination partners are at present:

- **SPAIN:** The Incyde Foundation
- **BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG (GERMANY):** Regional Ministry of Economy
- **GERMANY:** The German Microfinance Institute DMI

3. HOW IS COPIE 2 ORGANISED IN THEMES?

COPIE 2 is organised in five Communities of Practice. Learning and good practice exchange between partners is organised around the four themes of

- CoP 1: Action planning;**
- CoP 2: Entrepreneurship Education;**
- CoP 3: Quality Management;**
- CoP 4: Integrated Business Support**
- CoP 5: Access to Finance.**

The partners have chosen to participate in individual Communities based on a diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective enterprise support systems as regards to inclusive entrepreneurship. To better understand the quality of current mode of delivery, and to detect their individual needs, the majority of them have applied the COPIE 2 own **European Tool for Inclusive Entrepreneurship**.

The **European Tool for Inclusive Entrepreneurship** takes stakeholders systematically through a process which includes an analysis and synthesis of enterprise support in their region, sub region or city. This tool is targeted at entrepreneurship specifically for groups such as the unemployed, women, migrants and ethnic minorities, 50 plus, young people under 30, people with disabilities and social enterprises. It consists of a matrix analysis with identifies the main gaps or challenges to the support system for entrepreneurship in the main themes of strategy, culture and conditions, start-up support and training, support for consolidation and growth and access to finance. An introduction into the functionalities of the tool can be found here: [COPIE European Tool](#).



For more information and support in applying the tool please contact Bettina Reuter (bettina.reuter@bmas.bund.de).

Based on the individual priority areas for action, the five Communities of Practice consist of five to seven of the partners on average. They have been running for almost a year and carried out a number of activities, including e.g.

- regional baselines studies in each of the five themes;
- international inclusive entrepreneurship strategy workshops;
- regional in-depth analysis and conduction of surveys on quality standards in business advice;
- initiation of a pan-European collaboration platform of people dealing with entrepreneurship education;
- the development of a good practice assessment tool for microfinance.

By the end of the project period, the COPIE 2 will thus be able to provide regional and national ESF and ERDF Managing Authorities from other countries in Europe with a comprehensive set of tools to analyse and improve their support structure for inclusive entrepreneurship.

For more information on the individual **Communities of Practice**, please contact the respective experts:

CoP 1: Action planning (led by Germany)

Lead Expert: Iain Willox, UK
Email: iainwillox@hotmail.co.uk
Web: [CoP 1 Action Planning](#)

CoP 2: Entrepreneurship Education (led by Spain)

Lead Expert: Ivan Diego, Spain
Email: ivan@valnalon.com
Web: [CoP 2 Enterprise Education](#) / [Enterprise Education Blog](#)

CoP 3: Quality Management (led by Germany)

Lead Expert: Norbert Kunz, Germany
Email: kunz@iq-consult.com
Web: [CoP 3 Quality Management](#)

CoP 4: Integrated Start-Up Support (led by Asturias, Spain)

Lead Expert: Ana M^a Mendez, Spain
Email: ana@ceei.es
Web: [CoP 4 Integrated Start-Up Support](#)

CoP 5: Access to Finance (led by Flanders with support from Czech Republic)

Lead Expert: Ruben Vandeweghe, Belgium
Email: ruben.vandeweghe@hefboom.be
Web: [CoP 5 Access to Finance](#)



All of these groups are coordinated through a **central coordination structure** which provides project management support, organise training activities, web support, produces capitalisation products and dissemination events.

The central coordination structure is comprised of:

Lead Partner: The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

Overall responsibility: Bettina Reuter

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External Support: Central COPIE 2 Project management and COPIE 2 events

EU Expert: Iain Willox

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External Support: Central COPIE 2 Mainstreaming and Dissemination

EU Expert: Stephanie Koenen

Email: mail@koenen.co.uk

4. ANNEX: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4.1. WHERE DID THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE COME FROM?

The Community of Practice on Inclusive Entrepreneurship has emerged from the EU Community Initiative EQUAL. It builds on the final stages of the work carried out by nearly 300 development partnerships that focused on opening up the process of business creation to all members of society. Many of the 10 countries involved in this work created National Thematic Networks to exchange and mainstream their findings.

4.2. WHAT IS THE COPIE ENTREPRENEURSHIP LADDER?

The main themes dealt with in business creation are very similar across the countries. They have been described as the four parts of “an entrepreneurial ladder out of social exclusion”. The four parts are

- creating the culture and conditions for entrepreneurship;
- integrated start-up support and training,
- access to finance.
- support for consolidation growth

The Community of Practice has also drawn heavily on the work carried out within EQUAL in the Social Economy and from other national and international programmes on entrepreneurship. One particularly influential piece of work was work on policy measures to promote the use of micro credit for social inclusion which developed a tool for analysing practice in eight Member States and is now being used by the European Microfinance Network. A second was the Kiz tool which assessed how business friendly cities were.

4.3. WHY INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Many people across Europe are falling through a gap between entrepreneurship and employment policies. On the one hand, many of those responsible for economic and business development feel that entrepreneurship is primarily the reserve of the more educated and technologically advanced members of society. Enterprise policy focuses heavily on building on Europe’s strengths for competing on world markets dominated more and more by the knowledge economy. Policy measures to support technology centres, clusters, incubators and spin-outs have tended to be the result of this focus

On the other hand, those concerned with social inclusion and employment policy often feel that the way to combat exclusion is through employment. Policy focuses on employability, training, counselling and so on. So, for example, European Employment policy is increasing concentrating on supply side solutions (like “flexicurity”) for helping the labour force adapt to a rapidly changing environment created by globalisation and an aging population.

COPIE argues that many people from disadvantaged groups can help to create their own future rather than hope that decent jobs “trickle down” from the high technology, high growth sectors. Widening participation in enterprise can enable more people to benefit from Europe’s enterprise culture. But the support structures for these new entrants to enterprise are usually weak and need adapting.



Harri Haanpää, 33, set up his own film production company in Helsinki, Finland